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A&M leaders, experts react to Dukakis-Bentsen ticket

By Stephen Masters
Staff Writer

Political leaders and experts at Texas A&M reacted with surprise to Democratic presidential nominee Michael Dukakis' recommendation of Sen. Lloyd Bentsen as his running mate on Tuesday. Some offered support while others were skeptical about his effect on the campaign.

Current and former leaders of Aggie Democrats were supportive of Dukakis' choice. "I think he (Dukakis) made a wise decision," said William Hancock, former president of Aggie Democrats and county coordinator of the democratic party.

"There were several in the running who were acceptable candidates. This is a decision that most people in the party will be comfortable with. From a regional and an ideological standpoint, I think he made a good decision."

Aggie Democrats president Michelle Touchet also supported the recommendation.

"Our job is to support Dukakis and his decision, and do whatever we can to help the party in November," Touchet said. "He (Bentsen) has his good points. It will help that he's from Texas."

Young Conservatives of Texas president Dick Lonquist and adviser Dr. Steve Pejovich were unavailable for comment Tuesday.

Dr. Warren Dixon, an A&M assistant professor of political science, was surprised at the timing of the announcement and expressed doubts about the reasoning behind Dukakis' selection.

"I'm surprised by it (the decision), mainly because it's so early," Dixon

said. "By conventional wisdom, having Bentsen on the ticket might help the Dukakis campaign carry Texas, but the ability of a vice presidential candidate to help carry a state is problematic at best."

"This move suggests that Dukakis is being very cautious. His conventionality is the most astounding thing to me."

"I just think this selection should make for a boring election. If George Bush picks Bob Dole (for his running mate), then you can just wake me up a couple of days after the election."

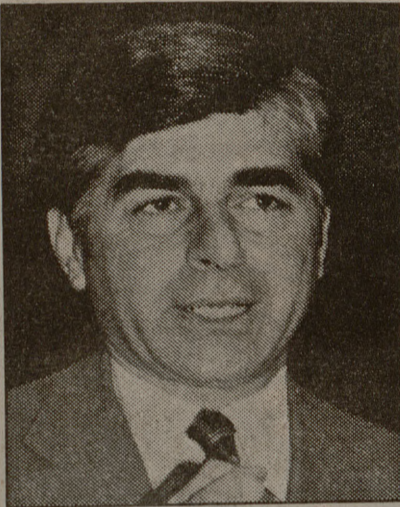
Gary Halter, adviser for Aggie Democrats, was more optimistic about Bentsen's possible presence on the ticket.

"Obviously it (choosing Bentsen) will make it easier for Dukakis to carry Texas. Bentsen has been in the Senate since 1970 and he has always won by a large margin. In the last election six years ago, he not only won his race, but also carried Mark White and other democrats into office."

There was also a general consensus that Jesse Jackson's claim on the running mate spot was unfounded.

"Finishing second (for the nomination) usually has never denoted any special status as far as being the party's running mate," Hancock said. "I can understand his (Jackson's) disappointment, but I think that the candidate should be given the choice and would hope that he would do what is best for the ticket come November."

Halter echoed Hancock's opinion. "Jackson has a lot of negatives with him," Halter said. "I cannot think when the second place candidate in the democratic primaries has



Michael Dukakis
Battalion file photo

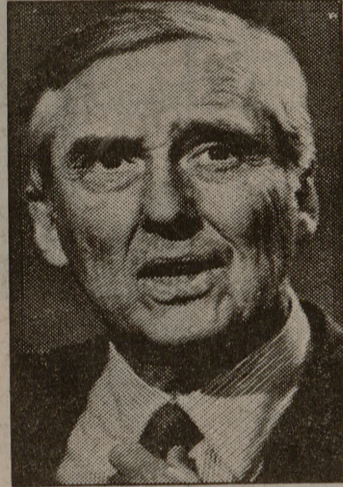
received the vice presidential candidate position."

"Jackson would have created some problems for Dukakis," Dixon said. "Pretend you are Dukakis. Would you want Jackson on the ticket with you? Jackson is just more interesting in a broad sense. Generally the presidential candidate doesn't want a running mate who is going to outshine him."

Touchet pointed out that Jackson's good points that he said should be stressed. "Jackson is a good guy. He's done a great deal for blacks and minorities in general. I'm sure we haven't seen the last of him."

Halter agreed Jackson won't just disappear.

"I do think Jackson will receive a cabinet offer if Dukakis does win the election," he said.



Lloyd Bentsen
Battalion file photo

While most agreed Jackson would not leave the national spotlight, Dixon wasn't sure Bentsen has had enough national exposure.

Dixon said Bentsen's past victories haven't necessarily proven his drawing power, especially at the national level.

"Bentsen is known in Texas, but he is not really a firebrand of a campaigner and is not that well known outside of the state."

"Bentsen's victories have not been so much of an indication of his strength so much as an indication of the weakness of the Republican party at the state level. I don't know to what extent he can extend the vote-getting power of the campaign, but I have always been skeptical about vice presidential help in drawing votes."

Lloyd Bentsen named Dukakis' running mate

(AP) — Michael Dukakis appointed Sen. Lloyd Bentsen of Texas as his vice presidential running mate on Tuesday, signaling a Democratic drive to reclaim a portion of the South in the fall election against George Bush. Dukakis described the decision as his "first presidential act."

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"We're going to fight for every state in the Union and we're going all out to win," the 67-year-old Bentsen said in his public debut as Dukakis' political partner.

Both men said they were following the path to victory forged by another Massachusetts-Texas team, John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, in 1960.

Jesse Jackson said he was "too controlled . . . and too mature to be angry" at being passed over, although some of his supporters in Congress expressed anger. Jackson said his name would be placed in nomination for president against Dukakis next Wednesday, but added, "I no doubt will support the ticket that the convention elects next week."

"That's interesting, that's what I think about it," Bush told reporters aboard Air Force Two as he left Washington for the Major League All-Star Game in Cincinnati.

The vice president said in a Boston Globe interview published earlier in the day that Bentsen

(AP) — Lloyd Bentsen:

- Feb. 11, 1921: Born in Mission, Texas.
- 1942: Received law degree from the University of Texas.
- 1942: Enlisted as private in U.S. Army, rose to rank of major, commanded Army Air Corps B-24 squadron.
- 1945: Elected county judge of Hidalgo County.
- Dec. 4, 1948: Elected in special election to Congress; re-elected three times.
- 1955: Moved to Houston to enter business; becoming president of Lincoln Consolidated, a financial holding institution; eventually was director of several corporations.
- Nov. 3, 1970: Elected to U.S. Senate, defeating Republican George Bush.
- 1976: Sought Democratic nomination for president; later withdrew from race.
- November 1976: Re-elected to U.S. Senate.
- November 1982: Re-elected to third Senate term.

"doesn't worry me" despite the Democrat's victory in a 1970 head-to-head Senate race.

Bentsen drew high praise from Republican and Democratic colleagues.

Senate Republican Leader Bob Dole said Dukakis "could not have picked a better man."

Nicaraguan diplomats get expelled from U.S.

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Reagan on Tuesday ordered Nicaraguan diplomats expelled from the United States in reprisal for the ouster of the American envoy to Managua and seven State Department colleagues.

At the same time, Reagan refused to rule out severing U.S. relations with the leftist Sandinista government, saying that it "remains an option."

The U.S. retaliatory move got caught in a snag, however, because Carlos Tunnermann, Nicaragua's ambassador to the United States, carries a separate portfolio as his country's envoy to the Organization of American States.

The confusion arose because the United States, as host country for the OAS, cannot expel envoys ac-

credited to that hemispheric body.

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater acknowledged Tunnermann's separate status with the OAS but said Tunnermann simply "won't be ambassador" to the United States.

Meanwhile, House Minority Leader Robert Michel, R-Ill., said that in a meeting that he and other congressmen had with Reagan, national security adviser Colin D. Powell said U.S. Ambassador Richard Melton recommended against cutting off relations.

The latest flare-up in mostly icy relations that have existed since the Sandinistas overthrew dictator Anastasio Somoza in 1979 prompted White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater to brand Managua's expulsion order and political crackdown as "black eyes for the peace process."

Secretary of State George P. Shultz, traveling in the Far East, called Nicaragua's ouster of Melton and the other U.S. diplomats action an "absolute outrage."

And the State Department listed a series of actions, capped by Monday's closing of La Prensa and Radio Catolica, that it said are "directed against the political opposition, labor and press in Nicaragua."

The expulsions came amid growing indications of a softening of opposition in Congress to a renewal of U.S. military aid to the Contra rebels seeking to topple the Sandinistas.

Reagan, asked whether he was putting off a new move to get Congress to approve military aid for the Contras, replied, "We're not waiting. We're working on that."

By Janet Goode
Senior Staff Writer

Brazos County lawmakers respond to Dukakis' choice

By Janet Goode
Senior Staff Writer

Brazos County Democrats were expectedly enthusiastic about the announcement of Sen. Lloyd Bentsen as Michael Dukakis' choice for a running mate, while local Republicans said a Dukakis-Bentsen ticket would help their party in both the presidential and senatorial races.

Ron Gay, chairman of the Brazos County Democratic Party, said he thinks Sen. Bentsen is an outstanding choice.

"He (Bentsen) brings ballots to the ticket both philosophically and geographically and makes our front runner look even better," Gay said. "I think this blunts Bush's assertion that because he (Bush) is from Texas, he will carry the state."

Rodger Lewis, county chairman for the Republican party of Brazos County, said, although they have a lot of research to do, the first impression is that Bentsen being on the ticket may give the Republicans an edge in the senatorial race.

"It will help our senatorial race because it'll clearly associate Bentsen with a strong liberal — Dukakis," he said. "Therefore, it'll be no problem for our Senate candidate to make it clear to voters in his campaign that they're casting a liberal not a conservative vote."

Lewis also said that a lot of Texans are going to resent Bentsen running for two offices at once.

"That should be another thing helping us," he said. "A lot of us don't even see what Bentsen brings to Dukakis."

But Gay said he doesn't think Bentsen running for the two offices will have a negative effect on the campaign. Referring to the 1960 campaign in which Lyndon Johnson ran for vice president and senator concurrently, Gay said, "I think that history repeats itself and what held in 1960 will hold true this year."

David Weeks, a spokesman for Bentsen campaign in Austin, also said he sees no problems with Bentsen running in the two races.

"Lloyd Bentsen is absolutely running for both the vice presidency and the Senate," he said. "He is allowed to under Texas law, and his name cannot be taken off the ballot. He will run a vigorous campaign for the Senate."

"He is not worried that running for two offices may bother some Texans. Either choice will be a good one for Texas. A vote for Bentsen is a vote for Texas."

However, Lewis said he sees the possible Dukakis-Bentsen ticket weakening the Democratic campaign since he thinks the two are strong and weak in the same areas in Texas.

"Bentsen is strong, for example, in the lower Rio Grande Valley, and so is Dukakis," he said. "Dukakis would've had those votes anyway. He doesn't seem to add anything to the ticket."

"Obviously, Texans would like to have another Texan in the white house." That fact may sway some votes that would otherwise not go that way, he said.

But he said, "Bush has the best chance to win the presidential election." "He has tremendous experience. There's hardly any comparison between his experience and the other candidates' experience. If you compare all the different public service offices Bush has held to those of Dukakis or even Bentsen, there's just no comparison. Dukakis has been a Governor and that's it!"

But Weeks disagreed. "Having Bentsen for vice president will be a good thing for Texas and for the country," Weeks said. "He brings a tremendous amount of experience and expertise to the ticket."

"He now holds one of the most powerful positions in the Senate and he knows how to work with the Senate. That in itself is a tremendous advantage for any presidency."

Senate bill may aid funds to move track

The U.S. Senate Tuesday passed a bill that could provide \$500,000 for planning the relocation of the railroad tracks along Wellborn Road to west of Easterwood Airport.

Officials from Sen. Phil Gramm's office said an amendment was added to the Department of Transportation appropriations bill that would supply \$500,000 to look into relocating the tracks.

Since the version passed by the Senate does not match the version passed by the House of Representatives, the bill now must go to a joint conference committee to work out the differences between the two. The relocation planning amendment is not in the House's version and could possibly still be cut.

The Board of Regents is awaiting the result of a study undertaken in May to determine the best location for the tracks. Gov. Bill Clements asked the Texas Highway and Transportation Department to manage the relocation project.

Plans for funding the actual movement of the tracks, an expected cost of \$50 million, are 45 percent from the federal level, 45 percent from the state, 5 percent from Bryan, College Station and Brazos County and 5 percent from Southern Pacific Railroad.

Thornburgh pledges 'to follow evidence' of attorney general

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Pennsylvania Gov. Richard L. Thornburgh, picked by President Reagan to head the troubled Justice Department, pledged Tuesday to "follow the evidence wherever it may lead" in the matter of outgoing Attorney General Edwin Meese III.

Thornburgh declined to answer questions about Meese in any detail, however, in an appearance in the White House briefing room with Reagan, who announced the nomination and urged swift confirmation by the Senate. The administration will be in office for only six more months.

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said Thornburgh's nomination will be sent to the Senate during the week of July 25, when Congress will be back from a weeklong recess that begins Friday so that members can attend the Democratic National Convention.

Sen. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, the senior Republican on the Senate Judiciary Committee, said he hoped hearings would "begin right away" and added that they can "if the Democrats don't delay the matter."

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, the No. 2 Democrat on the committee, which will review Thornburgh's nomination, said he expected a rapid confirmation.

"I have the greatest respect for Dick Thornburgh," Kennedy said. "The state of justice in America would be very different today if Dick Thornburgh had been attorney general for the past 3½ years instead of Ed Meese."

Meese himself was enthusiastic about Reagan's choice of Thornburgh. "I think it's excellent. I had the opportunity to talk in some detail with the president about the various candidates and I think Dick Thornburgh is actually at the top of the list," Meese said.

"He's an outstanding person and I'm sure he'll do an excellent job," Meese added.

Thornburgh, 55, had been mentioned as a possible running mate for Vice President George Bush, the likely Republican presidential nominee. And since Thornburgh's name surfaced on Monday as Reagan's probable choice for the attorney general's job, there was talk that the former Pennsylvania governor would be kept in the Justice post during a Bush administration.

Fitzwater said Vice President George Bush was consulted about the nomination.

On the question of whether Thornburgh would remain as attorney general if Bush were elected president, Bush spokesman Stephen Hart said, "I think it's premature to even speculate about that."

U.S. helicopters trade rounds with attacking Iranian boats

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. military helicopters exchanged fire Tuesday with two suspected Iranian gunboats that were attacking a Panamanian tanker in the Persian Gulf, the Pentagon said.

The boats had been shooting at the 81,282-ton Universal Monarch, which broadcast a distress alert at about 11:30 a.m. EDT saying it "was being attacked and was on fire," Defense Department spokesman Dan Howard said.

"To my knowledge, this is the first such exchange since the incident of (July) the third," when the USS Vincennes mistakenly shot down an Iran Air jetliner, killing all 290 people aboard, Howard said.

Two attack helicopters plus a Lamps Mk III surveillance helicopter from the guided missile frigate USS Nicholas were sent to investigate the Mayday call from the tanker, said Lt. Col. David Titus, a spokesman for U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Fla., headquarters

for American forces in the gulf.

"As the armed helicopters approached the Universal Monarch, two small boats were seen departing the area," Titus said. "The boats fired at the helicopters at approximately 12 noon EDT and the helicopters returned their fire with rockets and machine gun fire."

"It is believed one of the boats was damaged," he said. "There was no damage to the helicopters and no U.S. casualties. The Universal Monarch suffered some hull, engine and fire damage. No casualties were reported and the ship required no further assistance, according to its master."

A tugboat from an unknown country helped the Universal Monarch, Titus said.

It was believed that the attack helicopters were AH-6s, flown by Spe-

cial Operations Forces attached to the U.S. fleet in the gulf and operated from specially outfitted barges.

The incident took place in the northern Persian Gulf, 23 nautical miles west-northwest of Farsi Island, which has been used as a staging point for Iran's Revolutionary Guards in launching attacks by small boats against neutral shipping in the gulf.

The London-based Lloyd's Shipping Intelligence Unit said the Universal Monarch is owned by a Hong Kong company and managed by the Japanese company Tokudo Shasen K.K., of Tokyo.

The vessel was sailing empty to pick up cargo from the Khafji oilfields, owned jointly by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, according to shipping executives in the gulf who spoke on condition they not be identified by name.